



Shipwrecks & Salvage



by Christopher Timm,
Curator of Exhibits

In 1711, an odd argument unfolded publicly in London. The crew of *Nottingham Galley* debated who had eaten the most of the ship's carpenter while shipwrecked off the coast of Maine. Dueling printed accounts argued the particulars of this cannibalism on Boon Island.

According to the captain, after the carpenter's death "the men began to request of me the dead body to eat." After an "abundance of mature thought and consultation," the captain divided the body into equal portioned rations. Rockweed was served as a side, "instead of bread." The crew ate ravenously, enough so that the captain (allegedly) had to store the rations elsewhere to prevent "expending our small stock too soon." The crew's response, printed shortly thereafter, was scathing. The shipwreck, in the first place, was due to the "captain's obstinacy." They argued that it was in fact the captain who first suggested cannibalism, and "there was no man that eat more of the corpse than him."

The 24 days stranded offshore in the Maine winter had clearly soured the camaraderie of captain and crew.

As much as we are attracted to success stories—a swift passage around the Horn, a majestic ship launching—often it is the sensational tale of when things go wrong that truly catches our attention. One of the greatest maritime tragedies in the museum's neighborhood occurred at the mouth of the Kennebec with the 1849 loss of *Hanover*, which went down with all hands. Yet not even a month later, the story was dramatized with the latest-and-greatest technological wizardry that was entertaining audiences—a moving panorama. A predecessor to magic lantern slides and silent film, moving panoramas presented theater-goers with an "animated" story by cranking long painted canvases between mechanical spools. The *Hanover* panorama promised audiences "a truthful and life-like view" while also incorporating "the conflicting statements of those who

witnessed the wreck." This popular 19th-century medium has been brilliantly revitalized by the contemporary Maine artist Annie Bailey, who created a new, pint-sized panorama depicting the loss of *Royal Tar*, another tale that ticks the appropriate boxes for tragedy (no spoilers here).

Bailey's stunning *Royal Tar* "crankie" and these dramatic stories are found in the first fathom of our new exhibit, *Shipwrecks & Salvage*, which dives into the cultural, tech-



Maine artist Annie Bailey's crankie tells the tale of the wreck of *Royal Tar* and is featured in *Shipwrecks & Salvage*.

nological, and archaeological importance of Maine's less-fortunate vessels. Our long fascination with shipwrecks has helped spur our exploration of the deep, and diving technology has increasingly brought wreck sites within reach. But this access raises an issue, less sensational than the account of *Nottingham Galley* but perhaps no less debated: how do we best study and preserve shipwreck sites? With over 1,300 recorded shipwrecks—whether due to error or neglect—along the coast of Maine, they each present their own stories and preservation concerns. Wiscasset's *Hesper* and *Luther Little* were emblems of the town, until the visible wrecks succumbed to time and rot and were eventually removed. Some, such as *Defence* and *Nottingham Galley*, have been excavated, studied, and now contribute greatly to our knowledge. Others remain undiscovered.

Shipwrecks & Salvage raises some submerged treasures out of the depths of our collection and will be on view through mid-2020.

Current Exhibits

Shipwrecks & Salvage

On view May 18 – TBD 2020

Maritime Music

On view June 8 – October 20, 2019

Upcoming Exhibits

Tiny Maritime

Fall 2019 – Spring 2020

The Frozen Kingdom: Commerce & Pleasure in the Maine Winter

On view November 16, 2019 – April 25, 2020

From the Chart Table



Rhumb Line

A line on the earth's surface which intersects all meridians and parallels of latitude at the same angle. A line of constant course is a rhumb line.

Mission Statement

Maine Maritime Museum celebrates Maine's maritime heritage and culture in order to educate the community and a world-wide audience about the important role of Maine in regional and global maritime activities. The Museum accomplishes its stewardship through: discriminate collection, preservation and dissemination of historic materials and information, engaging educational programs, relevant and compelling exhibitions, and a unique historic shipyard, all connecting the past to contemporary and future issues.

Vision Statement

Maine Maritime Museum offers unique experiences through unsurpassed collections, well-maintained historic buildings, compelling exhibits, and outstanding educational programming and services. The institution is financially sound and forward focused; new technologies and viewpoints are embraced in a timely manner. Visitors, members, volunteers, and staff are enriched by their involvement with the Museum; the Museum's vitality infuses the regional and national cultures and economies. The Museum is a world-class museum attracting a global audience to Maine's rich maritime heritage and culture.

Beep...Beep...Beep...

This has been the soundtrack at the museum since March when Crooker Construction moved in to start the redevelopment we are calling "First Impressions." They've done a simply outstanding job since the very beginning, and I'd like to use this space to thank Tom Sturgeon, President of Crooker; Ian Pinette, unflappable Project Manager; the entire Crooker crew; and David Maynes and Todd Richardson of Richardson & Associates Landscaping. There are a half-dozen subcontractors who have been terrific to work with as well. Our neighbors and guests have been incredibly supportive during this construction period, and we hope they'll enjoy the improvements soon. Every member of the museum staff has been involved in some way – designing signs, building seating, managing the parking disruptions – especially deserving of recognition are museum staff Tony Croteau, Facilities Manager; Jason Morin, Director of Programs and Operations; and their staff and volunteers who are keeping it all together, on-site, every day!

It's possible that by the time you read this, the front and central sections of the project will be nearly finished with plantings in place.

Hopefully, the south end will soon be underway. The schedule calls for the hardscaping to be completed by the end of summer, all the rest of the plantings to be installed in the fall, and the Skip and Gerry Orem Riverwalk to be constructed around that same time. Next spring, the final top coat of paving will be laid, the rest of the signage installed, and the entire site will be ready to celebrate Maine's maritime heritage for the bicentennial!

This project is so exciting for all of us because it extends the museum experience beyond the front door, making it accessible in every way. The steps have been eliminated which makes it easier for everyone to reach the front door. The plantings are all native to Maine and reconnect us with the natural landscape. A spectacular inlay of the Kennebec River in the arrival plaza shows visitors the importance of



The demolition of the front steps in mid-March. The new stairless front entry will provide improved accessibility for museum guests.



Paving of the north (main) parking area began in early May. Guests got a sneak preview of the smooth new surface on Community Day (May 18).

this watershed. Groves of trees traditionally used in wooden boatbuilding provide living examples of how natural resources supported this iconic industry. A fully accessible Riverwalk skirts the wetlands and provides views and interpretation of our mighty river. All of this will be open to the public for everyone to enjoy. And all of this is thanks to the many donors who believed in this vision and invested in it. Thank you for caring and for helping!

Amy Lent
Executive Director

Around the Museum

Community Day 2019



Face painting is always a hit with our younger visitors!

Thanks to everyone who came out to help us kick-off the summer season at our third annual Community Day on May 18! More than 500 visitors enjoyed the day's festivities, which included raising the flags on *Wyoming*, welcoming *Mary E* back to the museum, lighthouse cruises, tours, demonstrations, and the opening of *Shipwrecks & Salvage*!



Visitors participate in *Seabase Delta: Aquanauts Academy*, a family-friendly, hands-on program that explores the evolution of diving technology. *Seabase Delta* is offered Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1 pm through August 22, and is included with admission.



Our honorary flag raisers prepare their flags for the race to the top!

Meet Jessica, Our Summer Interpretation Intern



My name is Jessica, and I'm the Interpretation Intern for the upcoming summer. This is my third year at the University of New England in Biddeford. I'm studying Marine Affairs and Policy, and minoring in Anthropology. Since I plan to pursue a career in maritime archaeology, I'm beyond excited to spend my whole summer at the museum learning as much as I possibly can!

Celebrating the Opening of *Shipwrecks & Salvage*

On May 16, around 150 museum members attended the preview reception for *Shipwrecks & Salvage*. The exhibit, sponsored by Sarah's Café and the Wiscasset Chamber of Commerce, explores Maine's maritime archaeology and the history of underwater exploration and salvage.



Curator of Exhibits Chris Timm and artist Annie Bailey pose in front of the "crankie" Annie created depicting the wreck of the *Royal Tar*, which is on display in *Shipwrecks & Salvage*.



Guests explore the history of shipwrecks in Maine in the new exhibit.

Guest Services Goes the Extra Mile



Museum visitors may recognize the smiling face of Guest Services Associate Sandy Lederman. Sandy always goes above and beyond to provide a wonderful experience for the museum's guests, even if it means stepping in at the last minute to perform a wedding ceremony.

A beautiful wedding was set to take place in Long Reach Hall in April, but as the time of the ceremony approached, the happy couple realized the officiant had not arrived. The groom finally reached him by phone, and learned the officiant was two hours away – he thought the wedding was the next day!

The ceremony was literally in 15 minutes, and there was no officiant. As luck would have it, Sandy, who happened to be working at the front desk, is a notary who has experience performing wedding ceremonies.

Renee Stachmus (event coordinator) offered a solution to the anxious bride and groom: Sandy would perform the ceremony! Sandy, although not dressed for the occasion, jumped in at the last minute, without a rehearsal or notes, and provided the couple with a beautiful ceremony (in front of 90 guests).

Well done, Sandy and Renee!

Salvaging *Detroit*



by Elisabeth Meier,
Project Archivist

At about 11 pm on September 6, 1846, the Bath-built bark *Detroit* was picking its way toward Nova Scotia in a dense fog when the sea went suddenly and ominously flat. The crew tried to maneuver away from the unseen danger, but it was too late. Within minutes, *Detroit* was stuck fast on a sand bar in a punishing surf, about 1/6 of a mile from an unknown shore.

The captain and crew tried everything they could to sail off the bar, but to no avail. By 2:30 am, with the waves constantly increasing, the captain decided it would be prudent to get the crew off the bark. They rigged a line to haul one of *Detroit*'s boats back and forth (it had gotten too rough to row), and succeeded in getting everyone plus "the best of the baggage" onto the beach by 5:30. An hour later, the locals had begun to show up, the captain's wife was ensconced in a nearby home, and a message had been sent to the nearest lifesaving station, nine miles away on the western end of Cape Sable Island.

End of story? If the safety of the crew was the captain's only concern, it might have been. But he was also entrusted with the valuable, nearly new *Detroit* and its cargo, and these were still imperiled by the surf. As soon as the lifesaving crew arrived on the morning of September 7, therefore, he set them and his own sailors to work trying to haul *Detroit* back into deeper water. They managed to shift the vessel about 20 feet toward the sea the next day, only to have their work undone by a sudden squall that drove the bark firmly back to the beach.

At this point, Cornelius Coghlin and Stephen Otis, two of *Detroit*'s crew, refused to do anything further toward refloating the bark. Despite the circumstances, the voyage was not yet officially over, and so they were still bound by the articles of agreement. Evidently, Coghlin and Otis decided that they did not want to have to sail this damaged vessel to port if they ever did get it off the beach. The next day, when waves were breaking masthead high over *Detroit*, sand was piling up around the hull and the hull itself was starting to break up, the two sailors returned to duty. At this point, it was obvious to everyone that *Detroit* was doomed.

But the captain was not yet done. Abandoning efforts to refloat his ship, he turned the crew to salvage. They spent the next week taking everything moveable—sails, rope, anchors, cargo—off *Detroit* and into a local storehouse. The official record of the voyage ends on September 16, when crew and cargo were loaded into the schooner *Daring* to be taken to Halifax.

Like everything that comes out of the archives, we know this story because someone bothered to write it down. Today, it is tempting to read it as a tale of daring, determination, and disaster at sea. But in 1846, the wreck was recorded for a far more prosaic reason: money.

Shipwreck means a loss of property, which means a loss of money, and for that, people tend to want a written record. Both the ship and the cargo represented a substantial financial investment, and the captain was responsible for doing his utmost to care for it. According to William Marvin's 1858 *Treatise on the Law of Wreck and Salvage*, "If the ship is stranded, the duties and liabilities of the owners and master are not varied by the event... They are bound to show that no human diligence or skill could save the property from being lost by shipwreck" (21). The written record of the *Detroit*'s final days exists to do exactly that.

The wreck of *Detroit* was described in its log-book, which was the legal record of the voyage. The detail exists to clarify questions of liability. Could the captain have avoided running aground? Once aground, could the ship have been refloated and repaired? If the ship was lost, could the cargo be saved? Was it possible to keep the cargo from further damage?



Salvage operations on an unidentified schooner.

The answers, according to *Detroit*'s log, were all "no." There was not enough warning to avoid running aground, and days of cloudy weather had made it impossible to navigate by sun or stars. Once aground, every human effort had been made to save ship and cargo. What was lost was lost to nature. And the human story—days of work in dangerous surf—was secondary to salvage efforts.

When shipwrecks show up in the archives, they are almost always recorded to clarify legal or insurance claims. They therefore show captain after captain making similar decisions about how best to salvage the ship-owner's or merchant's interests from nature. Some captains were more tenacious than others, some were more foolhardy, and some placed greater or lesser emphasis on the crew's safety. Few chose to abandon their efforts before everything profitable had been saved. Maine ships were sailing for commerce, not romance, and money as well as lives had to be salvaged from the sea.

Exploring the Deep

Leagues and Legacies under the Sea: Rewriting Diving History



by Sarah Timm,
Manager of Interpretation

This is a story of two Mainers: Sir William Phipps (1651-1695), a man whose life and fortune was made on the sea, and Leonard Norcross (1798-1864), an inventor who made a modest living on the land. A century separates the lifetimes of Phipps and Norcross but their histories share a common thread—shipwrecks and salvage.

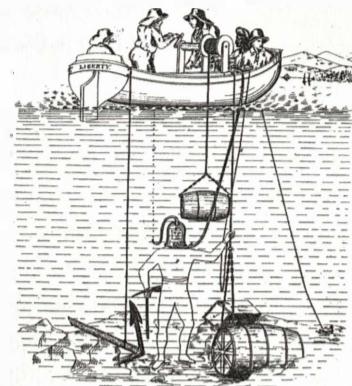
If the name Sir William Phipps sounds familiar, you may remember him from *Undercurrents* in the Winter/Spring 2019 edition of *The Rhumb Line*. Here we introduced the commemorative medal Phipps received in 1687 from King James II after discovering 34 tons of treasure from the *Nuestra Señora de la Concepción*, a Spanish vessel that wrecked in the Caribbean. Phipps, a Woolwich native, earned prestige, wealth, a knighthood, and a place in history with his discovery.

A question remains: how did Phipps retrieve the vast Spanish treasure from the bottom of the Caribbean Sea? Here we move from history to hearsay. There are two leading theories: first, Phipps employed local Caribbean free divers and, second, Phipps used a dive bell to reach the seabed. Both theories are possible, neither are substantiated.

Diving bells are old technology, recorded as early as the 4th century BC. Early diving bells are open ended vessels (think of an upside-down cup) and they depend on physics alone to operate. When submerged into water, the air pressure within the dive bell pushes against the liquid and creates an air pocket, a convenient source of oxygen for divers. Convenient until the oxygen runs out and carbon dioxide poisoning sets in. Enter famed astronomer, physicist, geophysicist, mathematician—the list goes on—Sir Edmund Halley (1656-1742). Halley, who is better known for the comet that bears his name, invented a diving bell system as early as 1670 that could replenish oxygen and thus prolong dive times. Halley was a member of King James II's Royal Academy, the same king that bestowed Sir William Phipps his commemorative medal and knighthood. Interesting coincidence or possible connection? Did Phipps use Halley's diving bell innovation? That we will never know.

What we do know is how history rewrites itself for the betterment or detriment of personal legacies. A *Mechanics Magazine* article (Volume 42, 1845) claims Phipps used a diving bell in his expeditions. An 1887 British genealogical document titled, *The Rise of the Phippises*, misquotes this previous article and credits Sir William Phipps as the “inventor of the diving bell.” It continues, “Phipps was knighted by the king and since that time diving bells have been constantly employed.” We should never underestimate the importance of fact checking.

While Phipps' legacy benefitted from conflated history, the same cannot be said of Leonard Norcross. Norcross was born in Readfield, Maine, an inland town northwest of Augusta. Over the course of his career as an agricultural mechanic, he filed multiple patents for agricultural machines. One invention stands out



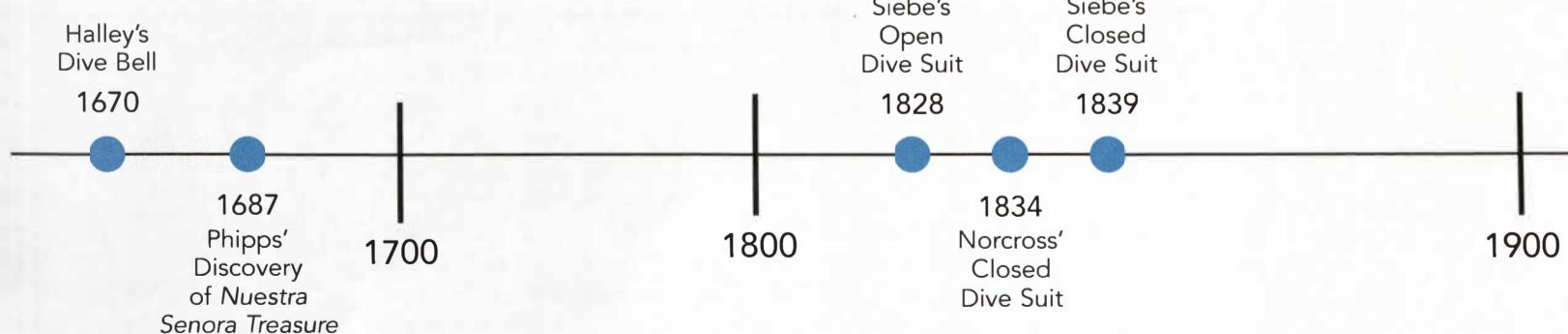
among the rest. Norcross filed US Patent 8255X on June 14, 1834, for “Diving Armor.” The patent describes a dive dress (suit and helmet) wherein the helmet is clamped to a rubber suit, thereby creating an all-in-one “closed” waterproof dive suit. Prior to Norcross's innovation, dive suits were “open,” meaning that the helmet functioned like a dive bell and was not attached to the body suit. Divers had to remain upright or the helmet would fill with water. These open dive suits were introduced by British engineer

Augustus Siebe in 1828 and were considered standard dive equipment when Norcross filed his patent six years later. Unlike Siebe's open dive dress, Norcross's innovation allowed divers freedom to move any way they please. How or why did Norcross, an inland Mainer, invent such a suit? We do not know the direct inspiration—but his invention was likely used for boat salvage and repair in Maine's rivers and harbors.

Alas, Norcross's name seems to be missing from the canon of dive history. Why? Siebe is often credited as the “Father of Modern Diving Dress” with the introduction of the first waterproof dive suit. Let us set the record straight. It was not until 1839 that Siebe's company, Siebe Gorman, introduced a closed waterproof dress—five years after Norcross filed his Diving Armor patent. Siebe's design went on to become the standard diving dress for the British Royal Navy. Norcross went on to name his son Submarinus. Leonard Norcross is rarely mentioned in dive history beyond novelty Maine history books.

The human endeavor to explore the depths is rippled with trial and error. History often best remembers—or misremembers—those who either triumphantly succeed or disastrously fail. If Sir William Phipps can discover an unparalleled treasure trove, then it becomes easy to believe he also invented the technology to make it possible. Or in the case of Leonard Norcross, whose anonymity as a modest Maine mechanic likely rendered what should be a full chapter in diving history into a mere footnote.

Interested in learning more about diving history? Join *Seabase Delta: Aquanauts Academy* on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1 pm, June – August. This immersive in-gallery experience for all ages will introduce the evolution of diving through interactive hands-on learning.





Giving to Maine Maritime Museum

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(1/31/2019 – 5/16/2019)

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The KonMari Method of Boat Ownership



by **Rebecca Roche**,
Development Director

With summer fast approaching, you may be starting to think about getting your boat out on the water. The joy of the sun warming your skin, the salty air blowing through your hair, the patterns from the sparkling water dancing across the hull.

Does your boat inspire that joy in you? If not, perhaps it's time to consider the wise (and *increasingly popular*) words of Marie Kondo "Keep only those things which speak to your heart."

Through our Boat Donation program, Maine Maritime Museum can help you find a home for your

boat where it does spark joy for its new owner—not to mention the great benefits for you, the donor. No more storage and maintenance fees, insurance, or repairs to worry about. Best of all, when you donate you'll be able to take the full appraised value of your boat as a charitable tax deduction—a better and easier deal than trying to sell it!

We partner with the Maritime Funding Association of Maine to handle the entire process, so it's smooth sailing for you. And once it's done, maybe you'll upgrade and find the boat that does spark joy for you.

Get in touch today to find out if your boat qualifies for the program: you can contact me at 207-443-1316 ext. 327 or roche@maritimeme.org.

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Goodwin Chevrolet Mazda

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(1/25/2019 – 5/13/2019)

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Allison Withers and Dwight Paine
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Upcoming Events

Mary E's Birthday Gala

Friday, July 12, 5-10 pm

Join us in the Percy & Small Shipyard for an incredible evening to support the historic 1906 schooner *Mary E* and the preservation of traditional maritime skills. This special event will feature live and silent auctions, music, dancing, dinner by Churchill Events, and more. Valet service will be available. *Individual tickets available for \$150. See website for more information.*



Kennebec Explorers Day Camp

June 24-June 28; July 8-12; July 15-19; July 22-26;

August 5-9; August 12-16; August 19-23

Monday-Friday, 9 am-4 pm

Early Drop-off (8 am)/Late Pick-up (5:30 pm) available

Members \$212; nonmembers \$265; early pick-up/late drop-off available for \$25



Our five-day summer camp will develop your child's curiosity for nature exploration and all things nautical. Each of the seven sessions includes outdoor adventures, boat cruises, games, science experiments, crafts, beach trips and more! Small weekly camper groups, low camper-to-counselor ratios, and experienced educators make for an unforgettable camp experience. For students ages 6-12 years old. *This program is made possible thanks to support from the Merrymeeting Bay Trust.*

Lighthouse Tours

Sequin Island Trips

July 15; July 31; August 14; August 30; September 12, 10 am-3 pm

Members \$56; nonmembers \$70

Sequin Island Light Station is Maine's highest light station. Your adventure begins with a guided bus ride along the Phippsburg peninsula. At Fort Popham you'll board the boat for a cruise to Sequin Island where you'll be rowed to shore to begin your exploration. Tour the island's trails, the keeper's house and museum, and climb the light tower to see the first order Fresnel lens and breathtaking views. *Due to weather and sea conditions landing at the island cannot be guaranteed.*



Atop Portland Head Light

July 17 & September 18,

3:30-5 pm

Members \$24; nonmembers \$30

Portland Head Light is Maine's oldest lighthouse and one of New England's most photographed locations. Tour the museum located inside the Keepers Quarters and enjoy a truly rare opportunity to climb the spiral staircase of the 80-foot tower to take in the breathtaking views from inside of the lantern. *Space is very limited; advanced reservations required.*



NPR's "Best Books of 2018," recounts the loss of the container ship, *El Faro*, in 2015's Hurricane Joaquin. Rachel Slade, acclaimed for her investigative journalism, unravels the mystery surrounding this recent shipwreck.

Tow Salvage or Vessel Recovery?

An Introduction to Salvage Laws at Work

Thursday, August 8, 6-7 pm

Members \$7; nonmembers \$10

Captain Bruce White will share his experience with Sea Tow to unravel the complexity of salvage laws. Explore the differences between salvage, a simple tow, and a vessel recovery through real-world examples of boating accidents off of Maine's coast.

Modern Oceanographic Equipment and the Search for the Schooner *Wyoming*

Thursday, August 22, 12:30-1:30 pm

Members \$7; nonmembers \$10

John Perry Fish led an oceanographic team on a 20-year search for the final resting place of the Bath-built, six-masted schooner *Wyoming*, which was located in



2003. Fish will detail the technology employed in the search for *Wyoming* and the latest equipment used in modern ocean searches.

Sunken Steamboats of Moosehead Lake

Thursday, September 12, 6-7 pm

Members \$7; nonmembers \$10

Director Ryan Robbins and producer Liz McKeil will discuss the making of a documentary set to premier in 2020 featuring never-before-seen underwater footage revealing the discovery and history of the sunken steamships in Moosehead Lake.

Maine's Deep Connection to Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary: Currents, Cod and Shipwrecks

Thursday, October 17, 6-7 pm

Members \$7; nonmembers \$10

Using stunning imagery captured with underwater drones and by divers, Ben Haskell, Deputy Superintendent of Stellwagen Bank will take the audience on a tour of several iconic shipwrecks that were built in Maine.

The History and Process of Shipwreck Archaeology

Thursday, October 17, 6-7 pm

Members \$7; nonmembers \$10

Prof. Warren Reiss will explain the significance, possibilities, fieldwork, analysis, and ethics of this unique endeavor using maritime archaeology examples mostly in Maine.



Into The Raging Sea: Thirty-Three Mariners, One Megastorm, and the Sinking of El Faro: Talk and Book Signing by Rachel Slade

Thursday, July 18, 6-7 pm

Members \$7; nonmembers \$10

Into the Raging Sea, a national bestseller and one of

For more information on all upcoming events, visit www.MaineMaritimeMuseum.org

The Nathan R. Lipfert Maritime History Prize

On May 16, Maine Maritime Museum presented the inaugural Nathan R. Lipfert Maritime History Prize to Morse High School sophomore Liam Scanlon. Scanlon was awarded the \$500 prize for his outstanding essay "The Recent Growth of Surfing on the Maine Coast."

The award was created to inspire high school students to learn about Maine's maritime history. The prize honors Curator Emeritus Nathan R. Lipfert (Morse High class of 1969), and is awarded annually to one Morse High School student for an outstanding essay about maritime history or culture.

There were 22 essays submitted for consideration, and a group of judges conducted a blind review of the essays, ultimately selecting Scanlon's essay "The Recent Growth of Surfing on the Maine Coast." Following their selection, the judges were excited to learn that Liam Scanlon is a graduate of the museum's Discovery Boatbuilding Program. The judges also selected three students for Honorable Mention: Katelyn Anderson, Tanner Hennin, and Anora Rice.

See the winning essay below.



Liam Scanlon accepts the award from Curator Emeritus Nathan Lipfert.

The Recent Growth of Surfing on the Maine Coast

by Liam Scanlon

Maine isn't the first location that comes to mind when discussing ideal places to surf. Maine's coast is usually rocky, it's usually cold, and it usually doesn't get the right conditions for that perfect barrel wave that you might see in Hawaii or Australia. But members of the growing sport in Maine have found joy in patiently waiting for that next set of waves. In southern Maine, there are quite a few surf shops that can introduce beginners to the sport and serve the needs of more experienced athletes. And in the same region are some companies who make their own boards to sell in and out of the state. Surfing is not a well-known sport/industry on the east coast, and I'm interested in which factors drove the recent growth of surfing in Maine.

First, it's important to understand why surfing is possible in such a cold place like Maine. Cold water is much more comfortable and safer to be in with a wetsuit. Wetsuits provide warmth by absorbing outside water and letting your body heat warm it up. The first modern wetsuits were designed for the US Navy in the 1950s, but they weren't used often because it was found that the gas in neoprene would make divers more visible to sonar. Two water-sport companies, O'Neill and Body Glove, spent the next 30 years designing and testing different wetsuits that they hoped to get on the market. Then, in 1989, Body Glove introduced new spandex and other thermoplastics to the wetsuit. These increased the warmth while continuing to keep the body flexible. Next, the full body wetsuit came about, covering all but the face. With a full-body wetsuit, between 4 and 6 millimeters thick, on the market, surfers emerged out of the harsh Maine winter. Now they could escape the summer crowds and ride the swells of the autumn hurricanes and winter Nor'easters.

I believe that the next factor to drive the growth of surfing in Maine was the development of small surf shops. Like skiing, it's hard to pick up surfing without the help of a lesson. A few years ago, I took my first surf lesson at Black Point Surf Shop in Scarborough, Maine. I took the lesson because I had seen surfers around Maine before and was really interested in this type of high-adrenaline outdoor sport. We chose Black Point because my dad was good friends with the shop owner's parents. They teach at Higgins Beach, a place that some argue has the best surf in Maine. Before I took the lesson, surfing was difficult for me because everything happens within a few seconds when you're catching a wave. But after having someone demonstrate and guide me

through the critical skills of catching a wave, it was so much simpler. Most of these shops, including Black Point, sell boards that are made by local companies. On the lower level of Black Point Surf Shop is a company called McDermott Shapes. They build custom boards that are priced by length or offer the use of their space, along with some instruction, to build your own board. Shops like Black Point are key to building a community of surfers in Maine because they really do serve all needs.

Midwinter, while the cottages are empty and the crowds disappear, is when Maine offers some of its best surfing. However, to go into the ocean while there's snow on the ground and the air temperatures are below freezing takes a lot of guts, even with a wetsuit. After a few summers of getting to know the sport, surfers can test their skills on the much larger swells of the fall hurricane season. Even when the storm doesn't come directly to Maine, if it passes over the Atlantic to the east, its effects will be carried with the energy of the wave. At the usually guarded and flagged beaches, such as Ogunquit and York, the rules of the flag only apply to swimmers. So if a red flag is posted, no swimmers are allowed, giving the surfers a wide open space. While this may sound nice, there are also greater potential dangers, such as rip currents. This is why it's important to be with other surfers who'll notice if something happens to you and to use a leash that connects your board to your body.

The recent growth of surfing in Maine is due in part to wetsuits, lessons, and board shops, but more importantly, it's due to the great community of surfers. On busy days, it's common to see a local expert helping a beginner or everyone giving kudos to the person who just rode in a wave while doing a handstand (though not common, this has been done). The community is helping to expand the sport, those who are enthusiastic about the sport, and even those who are going to meet at their favorite spot that no one else knows about. The members of the Maine surfing community can be hidden in plain sight. One article I read spoke of a lobsterman anchoring right near a lesser known spot in Casco Bay, where some other surfers were spending the afternoon, and he came right out with a board and jumped in the water. This is the kind of experience that makes Maine's surfing community so rich in diversity. Surfing in Maine grew for specific reasons, but its appeal grew because of Maine's great surfing community.

Boatshop Update



by Kurt Spiridakis,
Director of Watercraft and Traditional Skills

Discovery Boatbuilding

At the time of this writing, students are in the finishing stages of boatbuilding: sanding, painting, and staining their rowboats. Seven skiffs will be launched around the middle of June, our largest fleet ever! And the four participating schools have signed on for next year, meaning we will have students in the 'shop three to four days a week. Check back in the next edition of *The Rhumb Line* for pictures of the launches and interviews with students.

"First Impressions" Support

Many staff members and departments are working on various ancillary projects to complement the overall look and accessibility of "First Impressions," and the Boatshop is assisting with some woodworking aspects. We are building benches and trash receptacles to place both in the newly renovated south side of campus and the Percy & Small Shipyard to keep the look and feel consistent throughout the campus. For years we've received feedback that visitors need more seating during shipyard tours, before and after boat cruises and, while walking long distances across the shipyard. Also, the new landscaping of the campus renovation will provide great opportunities to sit and enjoy beautiful views of our campus and the Kennebec River.



Maintenance volunteer Tom McMahon tests out one of the new shipyard benches after installing it.

and across the north and south sides of campus. Though the benches are straightforward and simple, they are stout, durable, and enhance the visitor experience.

The trash bins, dubbed "refuse vessels" by the design and fabrication team, are built of traditional small-boat woods: white oak and cedar. This, along with a cambered roof, give them a very nautical look – a stylish place to put trash and bottles. Boatshop volunteers Marty Lakeman, Joe Feely, and Scott Gile designed and are in the process of completing 12 vessels that will look sharp and keep the campus clean.



Mary E

As promised last fall, *Mary E* has some notable additions to the rig for this year's sailing season. The main topmast went up in May, along with a topsail, and the fore topmast will soon follow. The mainsail is brand new, and slightly larger than before, which necessitated lengthening the boom about two feet. As we gradually replace the sails they are built with Oceanus ship cloth, a modern fabric with the color and texture of traditional cotton, that was developed in New England and is now the go-to fabric for tall ships and sail training vessels. It's impossible to accurately represent the new look and feel of the larger rig in words, but luckily *Mary E* will be available for afternoon sails three days a week starting June 5, so please stop by for a closer look!



Rigger Tom Ward installs *Mary E*'s topmast.

Sail Aboard *Mary E*!

Sail down the Kennebec aboard the historic schooner *Mary E*; the only Kennebec-built schooner still afloat. Help us set and trim sails as our crew share tales from her colorful history, or just sit back and enjoy the scenery. You'll pass by the site of the Thomas E. Hagan yard where *Mary E* was built in 1906, see Doubling Point Light and the Kennebec Range Lights, and get a unique view of Navy vessels under construction at Bath Iron Works.



Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday at 4 pm

Members \$45; nonmembers \$56; 12 and under \$45

Boatshop Workshops

Shaker Box Making Class

August 14 & 15, or December 4 & 5, 5 to 8 pm

Members \$75; nonmembers \$94



The Shakers are famous for their simple and elegant designs, and the Shaker oval box is no exception. Learn boatbuilding techniques such as clinch nailing and steam bending, though no experience, boatbuilding or otherwise, is required. Each participant will build three nesting oval boxes made from cherry and cedar.

Fireside Stool Class

November 6 & 7, 5 to 8 pm

Members \$70; nonmembers \$88

The fireside stool is held together with glue and wedges, and is a great beginning woodworking project. It's extremely versatile for adults, children and pets alike. You'll find yourself using it all over the house, and your friends will marvel at its artistic beauty. No woodworking experience is necessary – over 200 have been built by our 5th to 8th-grade boatbuilding students. Includes all materials.

Volunteer News

Volunteer Training Kicks Off the 2019 Season

MMM welcomed back our seasonal volunteer crew with the start of spring training in May. Our volunteers deserve a big thank you for the hours and effort they contribute to the museum and our visitors. Thank you!



Dozens of volunteers attend the annual spring training in Long Reach Hall.

Volunteers at Work



Volunteers Ed Lovely (left) and Richard Rotnem man the bar at the opening reception for *Shipwrecks & Salvage*.



Gallery docents share peer evaluations of the new gallery tours debuting summer 2019.



Maintenance volunteers (left to right) Phil Blauvelt, Bob Trabona, Tom McMahon, and Jonathan St. Merry install an exhibit wall for *Shipwrecks & Salvage*.



The *Mary E* docents prepare for another busy summer!

Volunteer Spotlight

Mary Ellen Miller

Administrative volunteer since 2017



What type of work do you do at the museum?

My volunteer assignment is to assist with anything that is needed at the moment in the offices. I basically do all the filing and keep the filing cabinets organized. I will also do any special project where help is needed. This could include extra mailings, information folders, or typing labels for folders. I have also been helping Libby Meier with a project in the library one afternoon a week.

Favorite thing about volunteering?

My favorite thing about volunteering is just being at the museum and being part of what is going on there. I love the staff I work with and have met so many wonderful volunteers. The museum is an interesting place, and I enjoy being there and learning new things.

What's your favorite exhibit, artifact, or program at MMM?

I think the boatbuilding that the schoolchildren are involved in has to be my favorite thing even though I am not a part of that. What a great experience for students. Personally, I like to look through the exhibits and read the huge amount of information that is there. It is too much to take in in a short period of time, but I keep going back when I can and each time I learn more about the history of ships and sailing. The project I am working on in the library is also giving me a lot of new knowledge about ships, cargo, and life at sea in the early 1900s.

What do you like to do when you're not at the museum?

When I am not at the museum I like to read. I also like to explore antique stores and take day trips in and around our beautiful state.

Undercurrents



by Christopher Timm,
Curator of Exhibits

Submerging a human in water—successfully—has always presented a number of issues. Intrepid explorers, inventors, and perhaps even kings have risen (or rather descended) to the challenge. Medieval authors believed Alexander the Great explored the ocean depths in an underwater glass apparatus (when he wasn't building an empire). In 1535, the Italian inventor Guglielmo de Lorena used a diving bell to explore the wrecks of Caligula's ships at Lake Nemi (should we call a floating pleasure palace a ship?).

What you are looking at here is a successful design from the 19th-20th century—a Morse Diving Company Mark V copper helmet. This particular helmet is a twelve-bolt, three-light example—"light" being the diving lingo for viewports. If you found yourself suited up in one of these, there are a number of valves you would want to quickly familiarize yourself with. The regulating exhaust valve on the left is important, as its two springs maintain the pressure of the surface-supplied air to within safe limits. You can manually adjust it, but please be careful. Internal pressure above 2 PSI will inflate your rubberized canvas suit



Le Livre et la vraye histoire du bon roy Alexandre, fol. 77v. Courtesy of the British Library.



Replica

like a balloon, causing a dangerous ascent and possibly busting the seams of your suit (and, possibly, you). Too little pressure and your helmet risks leaking and filling up with water...

On the right is the spit valve. It is a backup valve for regulating pressure, but it also allows you to suck in seawater in order to spit on and clear fogged viewports. Completing the 55-pound helmet was a weighted diving belt (83 pounds) and weighted shoes (34 pounds).

All in all, you should expect a claustrophobic experience—a confined space filled with the overwhelming sound of hissing and bubbling air, while you peer through small, foggy windows into the murk.

For the potentially squeamish who just want a look below water, the 21st century has far more convenient and drier options. Underwater ROVs (remotely operated vehicles) and even autonomous drones can now survey and inspect underwater sites in lieu of their operators. Recently MMM staff conducted an underwater inspection of the remains of the *Cora F. Cressey*—launched from the Percy & Small Shipyard in 1902—all from the comfort of a nearby pier. But drones face their own dangers, including seagulls and seaweed.

More on that in a future issue...

Copper helmets like these were used by the U.S. Navy until 1984, when they were replaced by the fiberglass-and-acrylic Mark 12. Have you dived in a copper helmet? I would love to hear what you thought of the experience... Email me at ctimm@maritime.org.

Get Your 2019 Boat Raffle Tickets



Tickets for our 2019 raffle boat are now available! Originally built in Washington County in 1960 and restored by the Maine Maritime Museum Boatshop, this Whitehall pulling boat has an easily driven hull shape and is made of cedar on oak and bronze fasteners. Tickets are \$5 each or five for \$20, and proceeds support the Discovery Boatbuilding Program. The winner will be drawn October 15, 2019. Tickets are available at the museum or at www.MaineMaritimeMuseum.org/shop.

Join or Renew Your Membership!

You may join online or complete and mail this form.

Please indicate Membership level:

<input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$60	<input type="checkbox"/> Family \$100	<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining \$150
<input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$250	<input type="checkbox"/> Shipwright \$500	<input type="checkbox"/> Downeaster \$1,000

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Please charge my membership on MASTERCARD VISA DISCOVER AMEX

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CARDHOLDER'S SIGNATURE _____

I have also enclosed \$ _____ as a contribution to help support the museum.

Please make check payable to Maine Maritime Museum and return to:
243 Washington Street, Bath, ME 04530
Dues and other contributions are tax deductible as provided by law.